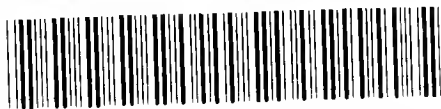


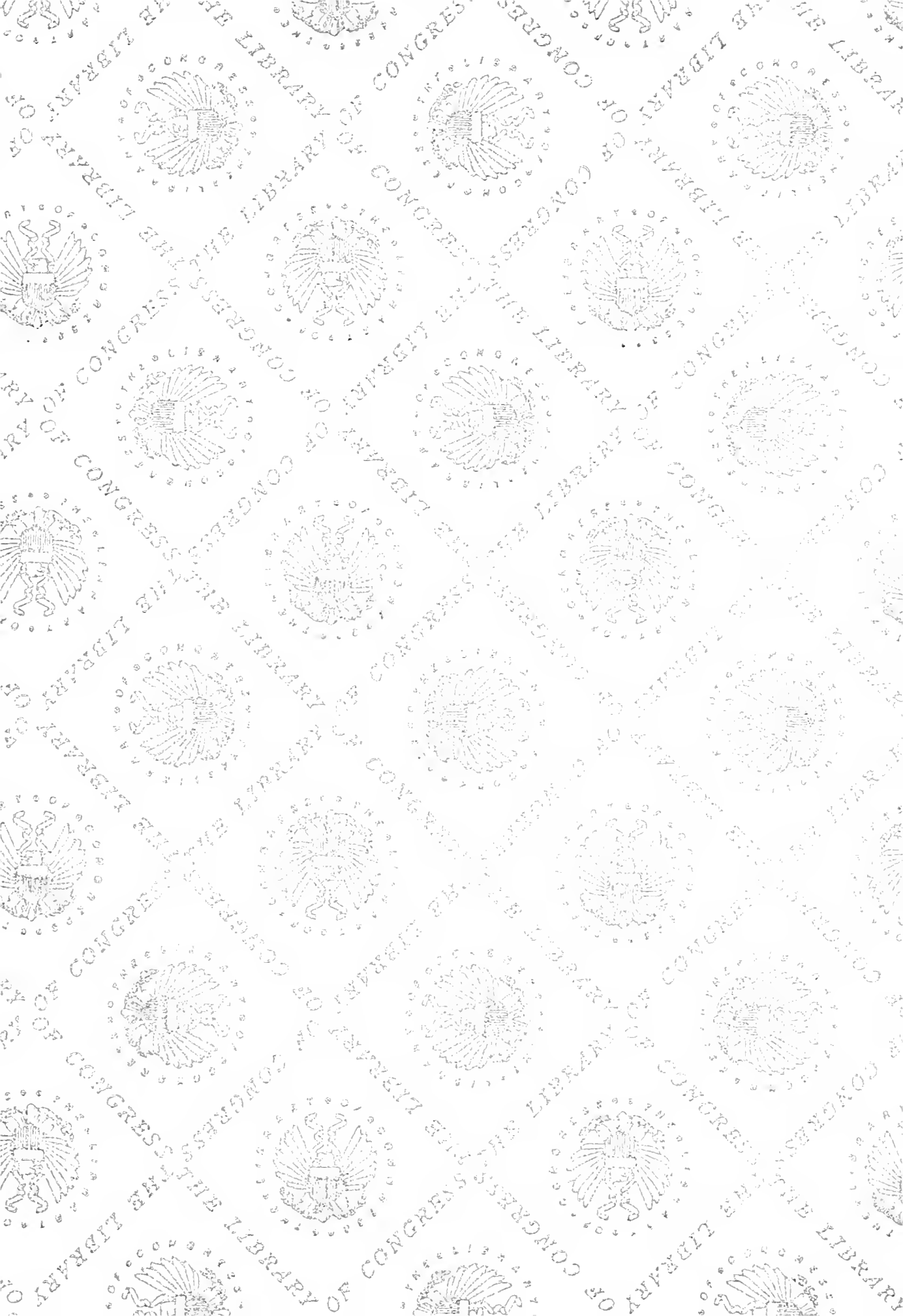
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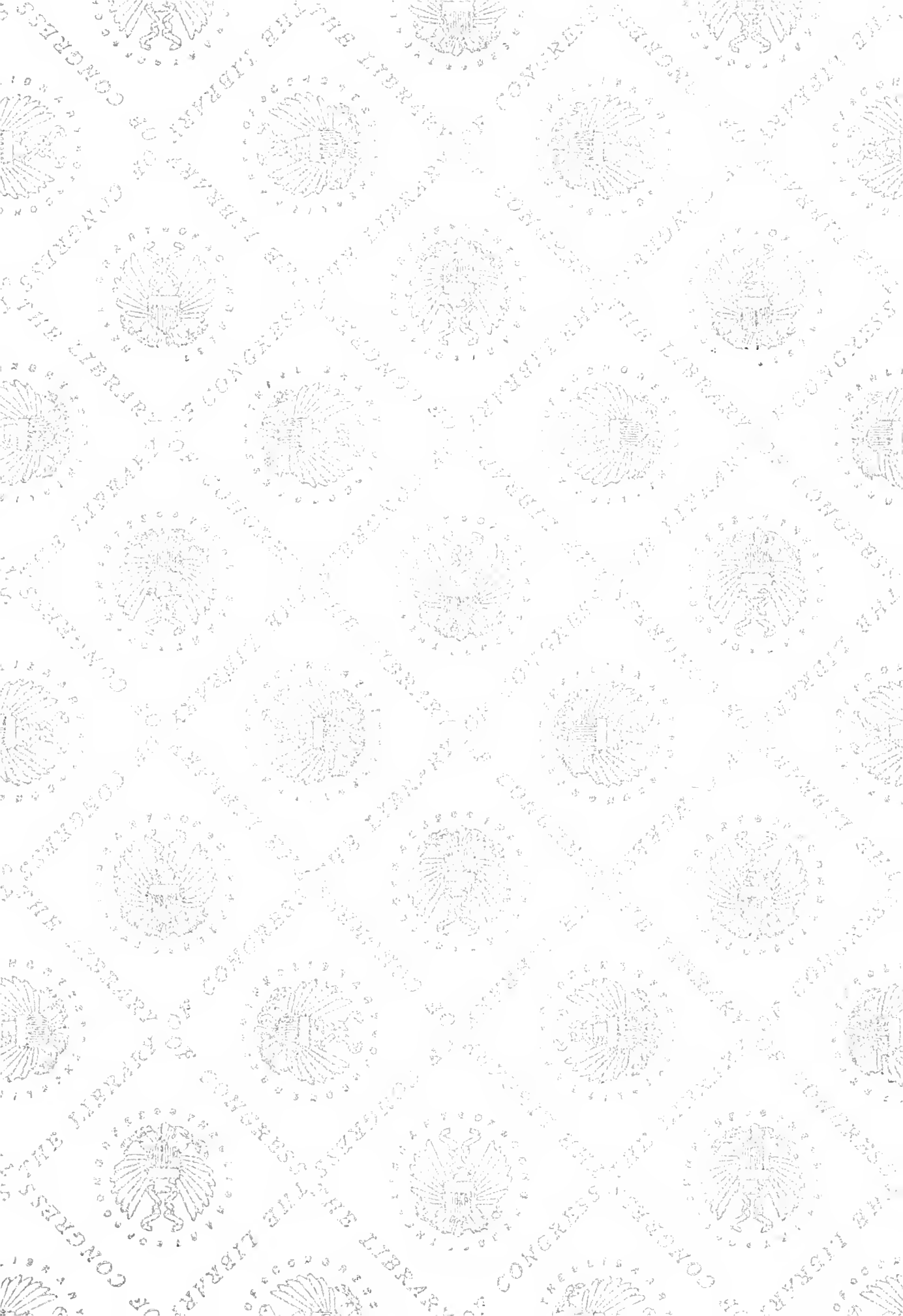
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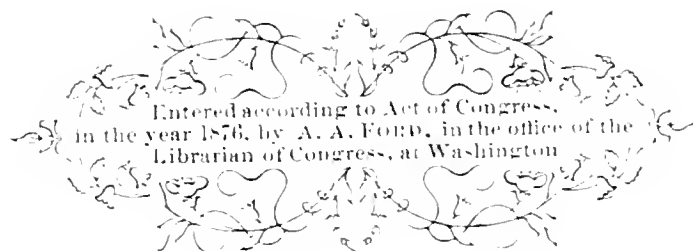


33

The glowing Past with tales of wonder teems
Unfolding stores of weird, fantastic dream,
And truth and fiction strangely meet and blend
In charming ways we scarce can comprehend:
Yet human hearts, resisting space and time,
Beat still the same in every age and clime.

1895

1895



SONGS OF CASTILE.

BY

A. A. F. . . .



DON MUNIO.

I.

If beyond the blue Atlantic
You should ever chance to roam,
To the land of vine and olive,
Once the wandering minstrel's home,

II.

In the San Domingo convent,
Built at Silos, in Castile,
You will find old mausoleums
Raised in times of holy zeal.

DON MUNIO.

III.

In these tombs, in peaceful slumber,
Rest the knights and lords of old,
Of the house of Hinojosa,
Once so powerful and bold.

IV.

Buried here lies Munio Sancho,
Bravest of Castilian brave,
And a legend quaint and pleasing
Lingers still about his grave.

V.

For upon his tomb at Silos,
In the convent grim and old,
Carved in everlasting marble,
Is this simple story told: —

DON MUNIO.

VI.

Years ago when Spain was ravaged
By the fierce Barbaric hordes,
And its people held their castles
Only by their trusty swords ;

VII.

When the Moorish hosts came plundering,
Devastating all the land,
Lived the brave Don Munio Sancho,
Stanch and chivalric, and grand.

VIII

He had won, in fierce encounters,
Many a glorious victory,
Till at last his name was famous
Far across the Southern sea.

DON MUNIO.

IX.

In his halls hung Moslem helmets,
Broken spears and banners torn.
Eloquent though mute mementos
Of his foes in battle shorn.

X.

Yet though trained in sturdy warfare,
He excelled in genial sports—
Falconry, the chase, the tourney,
All the pleasures of the courts.

XI.

Once while hunting in the forest,
With his lordly retinue,
Suddenly a band of riders
Burst upon his wondering view.

DON MUNIO.

XII.

Gracefully upon her palfrey,
Rode a Moorish maiden fair
Gayly robed in costliest raiment,
Brilliant jewels in her hair.

XIII.

While a young knight, bold and handsome,
Lingered fondly at her side,
And her drooping eyes and blushes,
Met his looks of love and pride.

XIV.

In their train were lords and ladies
Dressed in garments rich and rare,
Who with courtly grace paid homage
To the youthful, happy pair.

DON MUNIO.

XV.

When these knights and ladies riding
Briskly in the gladdening morn
Met his gaze, Don Munio Sancho
Loudly blew his hunting-horn.

XVI.

Quickly was the bugle answered,
And his merry comrades' eyes
Glistened brightly as they gathered
Round their unexpected prize.

XVII.

When they shouted to their leader,
At his bold and dreaded name,
All the Moorish ladies trembled,
Knowing well the warrior's fame.

DON MUNIO.

XVIII.

Naught dismayed the knightly lover
Vaulted from his Arab steed,
Humbly said to Munio Sancho,
“ I have heard of many a deed

XIX.

“ Which in time of war has tested
All your valor and your might,
Gladly do I show my fealty
To so chivalric a knight.

XX.

“ I have heard a generous nature
Warms your brave and manly heart,
And I would these noble ladies
Free from insult might depart.

DON MUNIO.

XXI.

“Abadil, who kneels before you,
Is a grave alcalde’s son,
Who would reach his native kingdom
Ere another day is done.

XXII.

“There to wed the sweet Allifra,
Trembling at her lover’s side ;
Take our jewels, claim a ransom,
But protect my lovely bride.”

XXIII.

Munio Sancho proudly answered—
“In our dearly loved Castile,
Unprotected beauty ever
Finds true champions, Abadil.

DON MUNIO.

XXIV.

“Rise young knight and keep your jewels,
Naught of ransom will I take,
If within my ancient castle
I your bridal feast may make.

XXV.

To his wife he sent a vassal,
To Maria Palacin,
That she might the party welcome,
When they entered his demesne.

XXVI.

As they neared the lofty castle,
Banners bright on every side,
Quick unfurled with friendly greeting
To the young and happy bride.

DON MUNIO.

XXVII.

While the wife of Munio Sancho,
Pleased the feast to celebrate,
With her ladies rich appareled
Met them at the castle gate.

XXVIII.

Graciously her guests she welcomed.
And with daintiest viands spread
Ushered in the nuptial banquet,
And Allifra soon was wed.

XXIX.

Still for two short weeks they tarried,
And with knightly revels gay,
Tournament and song of minstrel,
Sped the careless hours away.

DON MUNIO.

XXX.

Then with richest presents laden,
Did the Moorish guests depart,
Loth to go, and filled with wonder
At the Christian's noble heart.

XXXI.

Years went by, and then the war-cry
Sounded loud throughout the land ;
Once again the brave knights gathered
To obey their king's command.

XXXII.

At the call Don Munio Sancho
Fondly kissed his gentle wife,
Girded on his mailéd armor,
Eager for the coming strife.

DON MUNIO.

XXXIII.

But his mild and timid lady,
Tearfully besought her lord
To forego his thoughts of battle
Lest he perish by the sword.

XXXIV.

Munio Sancho then made answer—
“Tempt me not my loving wife,
Better I should die with honor
Than to live a coward’s life.

XXXV.

“Yet once more I’ll forth to battle,
With my seventy warriors brave,
And when ended is the conflict,
We will hasten to the grave

DON MUNIO.

XXXVI.

“ Of our gracious Lord and Saviour,
In the Temple far away ;
At the sepulchre we'll gather,
And our grateful tribute pay.”

XXXVII.

Then equipped with sword and helmet,
All their patriot hearts aglow,
Eagerly the Spanish nobles
Rode to meet th' invading foe.

XXXVIII.

Brightly is the warm sun shining,
As in coats of dinted steel,
On the plain of Salmanara
Stand the bold knights of Castile.

DON MUNIO.

XXXIX.

Bravely charge the veteran heroes.
But the Moorish hosts advance,
And the Christian line is shattered
By the Moslem's fatal lance.

XL.

Now the Spanish forces rally,
Munio Sancho gives command,
"On brave cavaliers, we'll conquer,
Or we'll fall with sword in hand!"

XLI.

Then the stout Castilian soldiers,
Hand to hand engage the foe.
And with loud resounding war-cry,
Fearless strike for weal or woe.

DON MUNIO.

XLII.

See! a Moorish knight has singled
Munio Sancho from the rest,
And his lance is fiercely aiming
At the noble Spaniard's breast.

XLIII.

Close they grapple.—wounded, bleeding,
Soon the Christian knight lies slain,
While the sun is shining brightly
On the Salmanara plain.

XLIV

And beneath, in peaceful valleys,
Heedless waves the ripening grain,
And the birds untouched by sorrow
Carol forth their glad refrain.

DON MUNIO.

XLV.

Raising then the well-worn helmet
From his victim's drooping head.
Back the Moslem starts with horror.
As he gazes on his dead.

XLVI.

Down his pale cheeks tears are falling.
Brave, unhappy Abadil.
As he looks on Munio Sancho
Now beyond all mortal ill.

XLVII.

While around him, dead and dying.
Seventy valiant warriors lay.
Who in Munio Sancho's castle
Blessed him on his wedding day.

DON MUNIO.

XLVIII.

“Luckless fate!” he cried in anguish,
“Gladly would I vanquished be
If to life I might restore thee,
Sweetest flower of Chivalry.”

XLIX.

Meanwhile, in her castle lonely,
Munio Sancho's faithful wife.
Breathing paters, murmuring aves,
Yearns for tidings of the strife.

L.

Peering through the gathering twilight.
Suddenly she sees afar
Banners flying, horsemen riding
Slowly homeward from the war.

DON MUNIO.

LI.

Quickly is the draw-bridge lowered,
And with mingled joy and pride
Forth she rides to greet her husband,
With her ladies at her side.

LII.

'Neath the bright Castilian pennons,
In the distance she can see
What she thinks are Moorish captives,
Surest signs of victory.

LIII.

Nearer comes the stately pageant,
But her cheeks are blanched with fear,
At the sight of Munio Sancho
Borne upon a sable bier.

DON MUNIO.

LIV.

All her joy is changed to sorrow,
All her smiles are drowned in tears,
When she sees her slaughtered husband,
'Reft of all his cavaliers.

LV.

Round her stand the Moors in silence,
And they gaze with solemn mien.
As their leader kneels before them
To Maria Palacin.

LVI.

Weeping, he implores her pardon
For the evil he has wrought,
Cursing now the fatal moment
He with Munio Sancho fought.

DON MUNIO.

LVII.

But the stricken wife, unmindful
Of the sorrowing Moor's remorse,
Broken-hearted, bends in anguish
O'er Don Munio's pallid corse.

LVIII.

"Holy Mother," cries she sadly,
"Send the angels from the skies,
Let them lead me to my husband
Dwelling now in paradise."

LIX.

While on Mahomet the Faithful,
Calleth Abadil, in need,
That great Allah may forgive him,
If the Prophet intercede.

DON MUNIO.

LX.

Thus the prayers of Moor and Christian,
Rise unto their God above;
To the Moslem God of power,
To the Christian God of love.

LXI.

Then the mournful knight, with reverence,
Lays to rest the Spanish brave,
And a costly tomb he raises
Over Munio Sancho's grave.

LXII.

At the portal of the Temple,
In Jerusalem of old,
Stood one day a Spanish chaplain
Gazing at the sunset gold.

DON MUNIO.

LXIII.

All at once a troop of horsemen
Led by one he knew in Spain,
Led by brave Don Munio Sancho,
Slow advanced across the plain.

LXIV.

Hastily the monks he summoned,
And the priests in solemn line
Welcomed in the weary pilgrims
To the holy, Christian shrine.

LXV

Round the sepulchre, the warriors
Pale and silent, knelt in prayer,
And their sacred duties ended.
Quick they vanished into air!

DON MUNIO.

LXVI.

Filled with dread, the chaplain noted
Well the moment of their flight.
And to Spain he sent for tidings
Of the bold Castilian knight.

LXVII.

There he learned that Munio Sancho
Was that day in battle slain.
With his seventy gallant warriors,
On the Salmanara plain.

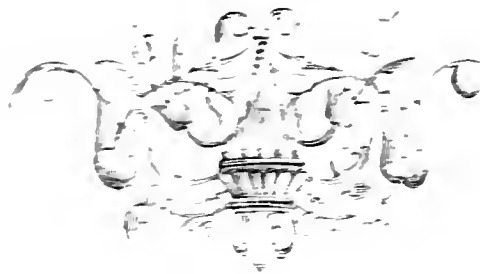
LXVIII.

Thus the phantom knights, so faithful,
In the land of Palestine,
Kept the vow they gave when parting
From Maria Palacin.

DON MUNO

LXX

And the quaint and pleasing legend
Lingers still about the grave
Of the good Don Munio Sanchez,
Bravest of Castilian brave





THE SPIRE AT COVENA.

PREFACE.

The following verses are founded on a popular tradition of the town of Covená, in Spain. This village is situated near Madrid, and its only object of interest is the church said to have been designed by the famous architect, Juan De Herrera, whose talent is further displayed in the architecture of the Escorial.



THE SPIRE AT COVENA.

I.

Covena's steeple rises high in air,

And proudly from its summit still looks down.

Graceful of form, with tracery ornate

Upon the quiet, ancient Spanish town.

II.

A master-hand designed the lofty spire :

His name the village gossips gladly tell.

And for Herrera claim a well-earned fame.

Whose genius helped to raise the Escorial.

THE SPIRE AT COVENA.

III.

His very soul and heart were in his works.

Inspiring every grand, poetic thought.

And with the joy that only artists feel.

His love created and his fancy wrought.

IV.

And when the steeple moulded to his will.

At last took solid form against the sky.

He loved to mount the staircase of the tower

And gaze upon the scene that met his eye.

V.

He saw the Tagus on its shallow course.

And nearer still, within its firm, brick wall

And massive gates of granite, coarse and gray.

He gazed upon the Spanish capitol.

THE SPIRE AT COVENA.

VI.

Its tile-roofed houses and its well-paved streets,
Its plazas with their fountains sparkling bright.
Its royal palace and its churches grand,
He viewed with pride upon the dizzy height.

VII.

And once, his son, a lad of sixteen years,
Not over bold, but blessed with temper sweet,
Left all his comrades at their boyish sports
To join his father in his loved retreat.

VIII.

Herrera, pleased that Andres had at last
Evinced some interest in his noble art,
Stood on the topmost landing of the tower
And watched the lad below with thankful heart.

THE SPIRE AT COVENA.

IX.

In haste the youth ascends the spiral stairs.

But soon his trembling limbs attest his fright :
With brain unsteady and with whitened cheeks.

He dare not farther mount the winding flight.

X.

Impatiently Herrera waits above.

But Andres starts not from his resting-place.
Until his father loudly calls his name.

And sternly chides him for his pallid face.

XI.

“Come, foolish boy, hast thou a coward’s heart?

If not, look out upon the street below.

I see Juanita there, the pert coquette.

Flirting with Pedro, ’neath the portico.

THE SPIRE AT COVENA.

XII.

“How small she looks, one scarce would think that she
Two years from now will be your little bride :
But listen, boy, she’ll wed no craven youth,
And Pedro’s heart is full of daring pride.

XIII.

“He often mounts these stairs with nimble feet,
He knows by name the buildings all around :
I’ll wager much, no braver lad than he
In all Covená’s village can be found.”

XIV.

Then Andres tried once more to look below,
But tried in vain, and soon in sorry plight,
Shamed by his father’s sneers and angry taunts,
With heavy heart he fled from out his sight.

THE SPIRE AT COVENA.

XV.

Next day, the priests and prelate of the place
With all Covená's worthies met in state,
And bade Herrera and his son attend,
While they the noble church did consecrate.

XVI.

And as they feasted in the banquet hall,
Herrera thought to stir young Andres' pride,
And told the guests the story of his fright,
Which raised a scornful laugh on every side.

XVII.

"Nay, father," cried the boy with burning cheeks,
"I was not well, else had I banished fear,
To-morrow I will raise the cross and ball,
And crown the steeple, to your heart so dear!"

THE SPIRE AT COVENA.

XVIII.

“To place the golden ball and cross aloft,”

Herrera said, “would give your courage fame :
You dare not do the deed !” The boy replied :

“I’ll yet prove worthy of my father’s name.

XIX.

And while a murmur of applause went round,

The father sat with thoughtful face and sad,
For well he new the peril of the act,

And trembled at the rashness of the lad.

* * * * *

XX.

Alone within his chamber, all night long,

Before the crucifix young Andres knelt,
And prayed the Lord to send him on the morn
Such courage as his heart had never felt.

THE SPIRE AT COVENA.

XXI.

And when the bright but dreaded morning woke.
With fear subdued, but still with feelings grave.
He hastened to his father confessor.
Who heard his sins, and absolution gave.

XXII.

With priestly blessing, and with lightened heart
He seeks Juanita at their trysting-place :
She greets him with a ringing, girlish laugh.
That brings a saddened smile to Andres' face.

XXIII.

“ Oh ! take me Andres to the church,” she cries.
“ See, I am dressed in holiday attire.
They say a fearless lad will mount the tower.
And place the cross and ball upon the spire.

THE SPIRE AT COVENA.

XXIV.

“ I would my Andres had as brave a heart ;
I long to see if Pedro is the one.”
Young Andres’ jealous heart could brook no more :
He cried, “ the hero is Herrera’s son !”

XXV.

With joy the thoughtless maiden clapped her hands.
And begged to witness Andres’ daring deed ;
The lad with firmness bade her bide at home
And count her beads in this his time of need.

XXVI.

They lingered by the bright pomegranate hedge.
One parting moment stood the lovers there ;
He plucked a scarlet flower from the shrub,
And twined it in Juanita’s glossy hair.

THE SPIRE AT COVENA.

XXVII.

Then with a brief farewell he hastes away,
And in the plaza joins the impatient throng,
Who press with noisy tumult round the church,
Whiling the waiting-time with jest and song.

XXVIII.

Quickly the church is reached, and at its base
In glittering beauty rest the cross and ball:
Young Andres gazes on the scene around,
And scans with hasty glance the lofty wall.

XXIX.

His father at the door, with tender words
Begs Andres even now the deed give o'er:
But roused at last, the lad with warmth exclaims,
"Juanita loves the brave, I'll fear no more!"

THE SPIRE AT COVENA.

XXX.

He swiftly mounts the long and spiral flight :
Hark ! from the belfry comes a solemn sound
As Andres, rushing on his upward way,
In passing, moves the bell to tones profound.

XXXI.

Then through the pallid, superstitious crowd
The murmur runs, "Young Andres tolls his knell !"
And mothers fall upon their knees in prayer,
Awed by the direful fate the sounds foretell.

XXXII.

But brave Herrera watches for his son,
And soon the eager crowd the youth descry,
As on the outer staging of the tower
He stands to raise the golden emblems high.

THE SPIRE AT COVENA.

XXXIII.

They wait with quick-drawn breath and strained eyes,
Their tongues are hushed and many a cheek is white :
No idle gossip now delights their ears
As all Covená views the thrilling sight.

XXXIV.

Yet two steps more, and then the goal is reached,
When lo, the father wild with anguish calls,
“Great God! my Andres trembles, he is lost!”—
While from the lofty spire brave Andres falls.

XXXV.

Look not upon the after-scene of woe,
The frightened crowd, the parent's bleeding heart,
Nor listen to the imprecations loud
He now invokes upon his once loved art.

* * * * *

THE SPIRE AT COVENA.

XXXVI.

Once more the dainty heather lends her charms,
And decks the fields around with snowy bloom,
And once again the rich pomegranate shrubs
Their gorgeous robe of scarlet flowers resume.

XXXVII.

And while all nature seems so fresh and bright,
A feeble man is seen at twilight's hour,
Led by a comely maid with glossy hair
To mount the staircase of Covená's tower.

XXXVIII.

He gazes on the scene with saddened eye,
That once had filled his heart with proud delight,
And then Juanita takes Herrera's hand,
And leads him homeward through the waning light.

THE SPIRE AT COVENA.

XXXIX.

Next morning when the glowing sun rose high.

Herrera called his neighbors to his side.

And murmured as his weary soul took flight.

“ ‘Tis just a twelvemonth since my Andres died.”

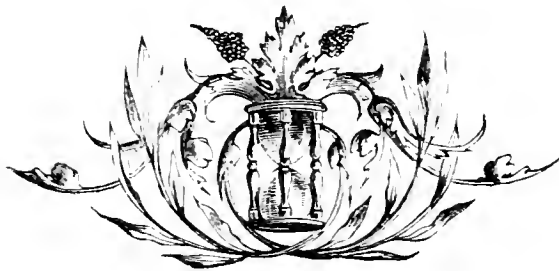
XL.

And as they laid him by his faithful son.

Juanita placed within his hand a flower.

Withered and old, yet precious as the gift

That Andres gave her in their parting hour.



C. W. CALKINS & CO.,
Printers,
No. 290 Washington Street, Boston.

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